

Second Chances

by Nussy

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Summary: Mulder is in yet another hospital... And while keeping vigil, Scully meets Dr. Susan Lewis...

1. Second Chances 1

TITLE: SECOND CHANCES (1/2)

AUTHORS: Nussy and Cirglas

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CLASSIFICATION: S R C (H)

KEYWORDS: X-Files/ ER Crossover, M&S/ Green & Lewis
>Romance, Phoenix, Arizona, Hospital, Coma!Mulder<p>

SUMMARY: Mulder is in yet another hospital and while keeping

>vigil, Scully meets Susan Lewis and they become
friends.<p>

SPOILERS/TIMELINE: THE XF MOVIE and ER's UNION
>STATION (if you don't know one of them, it's okay, I think
you'll
understand this fic anyway.). Smaller reference to XF
EMILY, XF
>PILOT and a few ER eps before Susan leaves. In this story M & S
are
partners on the X-Files, it's 2 1/ 2 years after Susan left
Chicago (I
>think it was in November) and a year after the XF movie took place.
I
don't know if that is possible time wise, so if not, try to
imagine it
>anyway, okay? :-).<p>

DISTRBUTION: This goes to Gossamer through EP. Anywhere and

>anybody else is welcome to, just tell us where and don't earn

any
money from it or say that anybody else wrote this...

AUTHORS' NOTES:

We're sorry this story took us so long to be completed. Real life got in

the way, but here it is...finally!

The beginning of the story might be a little 'medical' so if you don't
>understand a word, don't worry (we asked people with
medical
knowledge to help, and now we're a little lost ourselves)
and just read
>on; the rest is easier to understand.<p>

Nessy: We never did a Crossover before and we definitely never

>wrote ER-fic, either. Hope it turned out okay anyway. We had a lot
of
fun with it and we're glad to be able to happy-end two great
series.

>G If there are still typos or other mistakes in here, they're
probably<p>

my fault (NOT the beta readers' fault), because I tend to change a
few

>sentences at the very last moment. :-)<p>

Cirglas: This is very different from everything we have written so
far,

especially because we have another character besides Mulder and

>Scully playing a major part in the story. But don't worry, there
is
enough MSR in here anyway.

DISCLAIMER: They do not belong to us (is there really anyone who

>does NOT know where M&S come from? Carter you're a
Saint!!)
and whoever owns Green, Lewis and co.: Thanks for letting
us borrow

>them ;-) We're not making any money with this story, so don't sue
us,
it's not worth the trouble...

DEDICATION/ THANKS: Many, MANY thanks to Susan!! You
>started out as a med contact but helped us through the whole
story.
Thank you so much for your help, 'cause without you this
would have
>never gotten finished and would only be half as good. Thanks also
to
Ten, Fabiana, Tanja, and everybody else for the encouragement
and
>help.<p>

This piece of fiction is for everybody who wants Greene and Lewis to

>get together as badly as Mulder and Scully !!<p>

POSTED: 13 th April 2000

SECOND CHANCES (1/2)

>by Nussy and Cirglas<p>

Phoenix, Arizona

>May 15 th 1999
9:36 pm

The doors to the emergency room burst open and immediately the hall

>was filled with people and voices.<p>

"What have we got, Dave?" The female resident asked the entering

>EMP, shouting over the usual bustle.<p>

"White male, age 38, GSW to left shoulder. LOC at 9:24 pm.

>Flatlined for 4 minutes at 9:29. Pulse: 120-150, blood pressure
60
palp, Glasgow rating: 6," the EMP diligently recited.

"Get me four units of O neg and type and cross-match for six more."

>She turned to her patient. "Sir? Can you hear me?" After waiting
in
vain for a response, she directed her attention back to her
colleagues.

>"Get me a PA and lateral chest, also a C-spine. Someone
page
Holden."

>Suddenly she realized there was a face she didn't recognize. "And
you
are...?"

"I'm his partner, I administered first aid and have his PoA!", the

>petite red-head answered.<p>

"You'll have to wait outside, Ma'am. Jessie will be with you in a

>minute," Susan said just before the doors closed behind her --
right
into the concerned woman's face.

"Just great, Mulder, just great." She crossed her arms over her chest
to

stop them from trembling but when she encountered a sticky

>sensation, she looked down at herself and realized there was
blood
soaking into the front of her suit. "Mulder, why are you
doing this to
>me!?"<p>

May 16th

>01:47 am
Waiting Room

Scully glanced at her watch again. This was taking way too much

>time. She had borrowed scrubs from the hospital and tried to wash
out
her clothes as much as possible, but the blood stains just
hadn't come

>out. She had anticipated as much -- remembering previous
similar
situations -- but she had needed to do something to occupy
her mind.

>After she had done the paper work and gone through Mulder's
record
with the nurse, she had called Skinner, her mother, the

Lone Gunmen

>and had checked her own voice mail, all just to get her mind off what
was happening right on the other side of that plain white wall. The
>same wall which she was now pacing before and only stopping every
once in a while to glare at it.

She hated waiting and especially sitting around doing nothing. She

>mused it might have something to do with her Irish heritage and the
fact that waiting usually didn't help, or mean anything good. Most of
>the time she could control her impatience to the extent that nobody
else would notice her anxiety, but every time Mulder was brought into
>the equation, it just took too much out of her.<p>

She breathed out a sigh of frustration and sank down into one of those
>uncomfortable chairs again. That was the problem, wasn't it? This
was Mulder, not just some colleague she only knew briefly or who
>wasn't that important to her. Mulder was more than her work partner,
he was her best friend - her only real friend. Someone she could talk
>to - but usually didn't even need to, someone who understood her
problems and fears. They were a team. And she was about to lose
>him...<p>

God, what would she do without Mulder? She had been forced to ask

>herself that question many times over the years, usually because
Mulder was -- just like now -- in a life-threatening situation. And
>still,
she hadn't been able to answer the question yet, and she knew there
>really was no answer. She just didn't know how she could go on
without him.

She tried unsuccessfully to think of something else. Unable to sit still

any longer, she again paced between the plastic chairs and the trauma
>room doors.<p>

Were they taking good care of him? Was he waking up and she
>wasn't there to calm him down? Or worse: Was he dying in there,
with all those strangers, yet terribly alone?

Scully was ready to kick in the door to the trauma room and see for
>herself.<p>

Just then the doors opened and a very bedraggled doctor stepped out.

>Behind her the gurney with Mulder was brought out and rolled away.
Scully was just about to follow his unconscious form when the doctor

>blocked her way and reached for her arm.<p>

Scully was starting to get nervous. "What is it ?!"

"So you are Agent Dana Scully?"

"Yes", Scully answered with a sinking feeling and her stomach

>knotting up into a tight ball.<p>

The doctor nodded and said, "Okay." She lead her a few steps away

>from the other people and began to talk. "Agent Scully, my name
is
Doctor Lewis. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but your
partner is in

a very bad shape. We have him stabilized now but..." She tried to
read

>the woman's face, but was confronted with a professional mask,
so
she continued. "He lost a lot of blood and especially the fact
that he

>flatlined for over 4 minutes is not very good."<p>

Scully let out the breath she had been holding and nodded sadly.

But Susan had another bit of information that she needed to inform

>the agent about. "Frankly, we don't know if there's any
permanent
damage to the brain, and we will only be able to asses
that after he

>comes to. Unfortunately, he was starting to get restless, so for
the
time

>being we had to sedate him to a state of coma, so that his
wounds
have a better chance to heal. We'll have to wait a day or
two to find

>out, but since his pupils are equal and reactive we're quite
optimistic.<p>

Do you understand the situation?"

"Yes, I-- I'm a doctor myself."

"Good. The thing is, he can emerge out of this unscathed or he could

>be seriously disabled - we just don't know yet. We're bringing him
up
to ICU right now and then you'll be able to see him once
they're

>finished arranging everything."<p>

"Thank you, Dr. Lewis."

"I'm sorry I can't do more," she replied, but Scully was already

>heading to ICU.<p>

May 16 th 1999

>3:45 am
ICU

Scully turned her head as she sensed more than heard the door

>opening. She smiled as she recognized the figure entering.<p>

"Hello, Dr. Lewis."

"Agent Scully."

Susan smiled at Scully encouragingly and moved closer to her and the

>bed. In silence she took Mulder's chart and studied it. Then she took
an unoccupied chair from the other side of the bed and planted it next
>to Scully's sitting form, taking a seat herself.<p>

Scully raised her eyebrows at Susan's obvious intention of staying.

"How is he doing?" Susan inquired softly.

"No change yet, but that can be seen as a good sign, I guess." Scully

>shrugged her shoulders. "And he's still hanging in there and for that
I'm thankful. But, you know, trust him to become all fidgety and need
>to be sedated. Now we can't estimate the damage to his brain until it
wears off."

"Agent Scully... We don't know if he'd be awake even then."

"Yeah, I know. But sometimes I do get the feeling that he doesn't

>want to wake up." She smiled to herself. "Like he knows he'll get
punished for scaring me like that."

"Is that what awaits him?", was Susan's half joking, half serious

>reply.<p>

Scully shook her head. "No, of course not. I used to believe I could be
>mad at him for getting into trouble like this and I'd prepare to be
angry at him. But somehow, as soon as he wakes up I'm just so glad
>he finally did that I completely forget to get angry."<p>

"Lucky him."

Scully snorted in agreement. "Definitely 'lucky him'."

Susan realized something: "So this is not the first time that he is in
>the hospital?"<p>

Scully looked up at her with tired eyes. "The first time? I don't even
>remember the first time. And I didn't even start counting. He just
always walks into dangerous situations and then ends up in the
>hospital. He is like a magnet for trouble. And I can't prevent it, so,
at

>the end, I just pick up the pieces and set Humpty-Dupmtty
back
together again." She turned back to the patient.

"You've never even been a practicing doctor, right?"

"No, but I'm getting enough practice, mind you. There's not a limb

>he hasn't injured, a kind of drug he hasn't had - whether before
or
during his stay in a hospital. A med class would have a field
day with
>him. So much variety."<p>

Scully turned from Mulder back to Susan when the woman next to her

>said, "You look tired, Agent Scully. Go back to the hotel, get
some
sleep. I'll have someone notify you if anything
changes."

"I'm not going anywhere. But what are you still doing here? Your

>shift's over, the ICU isn't your responsibility anyway. We don't
both
have to stay here."

Susan moved her shoulders tiredly and rolled her neck. "Yeah, it was

>a long day. But I'm not ready to go home. Only an empty
apartment
waiting for me anyway."

Scully gave a genuine smile now. "Ah, a kindred spirit. Married with

>your work, are you? Call me Dana."<p>

Susan nodded while reaching for Scully's hand to shake it. "And I'm

>Susan."<p>

Simultaneously, they both turned to Mulder who was oblivious of

>their scrutiny.
In their silence, the machines keeping Mulder
alive were deafening
>and in the eerie glow emanating from the hospital lights, the
two
women waited for Mulder to recover.

May 16 th
>11:46 am
ICU

"Dana. Come on. Dana, wake up."

Slowly, Scully's senses were coming alive and she began to regain her

>orientation. "Wha- What?" She squinted at someone hovering
over
her and slowly the haze before her eyes lifted enough to
recognize the
>face. "Susan? What are you still doing here?"<p>

A chuckle answered her. "Still? Dana, I'm here again. My shift

>begins in ten minutes."<p>

Scully sat up in a hurry and checked her watch. Susan was right, it

>was almost noon already. Panicky questions like 'Had she missed
something?' or 'Was something wrong with Mulder?' were quickly
>subdued by her logic: She would have been awakened by the alarm of
the machines; she had become a light sleeper. Deciding a quick check
>wouldn't hurt though, Scully leaned over Mulder's unmoving form.
She felt his forehead and checked his pulse on the EKG. As she
>proceeded with her well-rehearsed performance she sighed in
frustration. There was absolutely no change for the better. She

>reminded herself that Mulder at least wasn't in a worse situation than
before, either. Then she remembered why she had woken up in the
>first place. She turned around to look at her wake-up caller.<p>

She turned to see Lewis with a half-grin standing behind the chair

>Scully had occupied until only a few moments ago.<p>

"What?" Scully asked still a little tiredly.

Lewis shrugged and said, "Oh, nothing. Hey, I brought you some

>coffee and wanted to check in with you."<p>

Only now did Scully notice the warming smell of fresh-brewed coffee

>that was filling the room and the two steaming cups Susan was
holding.

Scully looked down at her hands holding Mulder's left hand. "Oh,

>thank you, Susan." She took the offered cup and sat down on the edge
of the bed while Susan took a seat on the recently-vacated chair.

After taking a sip, Susan looked at the other woman. "How are you

>holding up, Dana?"<p>

Scully stalled by taking a sip herself. Then she finally answered:
"I'm

>Fine. Don't worry about me." She didn't feel very fine, though: She
had a crick in her neck from sleeping bent over, her shoulders were

>tense and hurting, she had a throbbing headache and most of all she
was terribly worried about Mulder.

"How often have you used that line already?"

Scully snorted. "Mulder doesn't swallow it, either."

"Well at least he's doing something right."

May 17 th 1999
>10:24 pm
ICU

Scully looked at Susan sitting in that horribly uncomfortable chair and
>wondered aloud, "How long have you been working here?"<p>

"About two and a half years."

"Only? Where were you beforehand?"

"I lived in Chicago and worked in Cook County General in the ER
>there."<p>

"Really? My aunt and uncle used to live there. Why did you come
>here? Get too cold for you in Chicago?"<p>

Susan smiled. "No, that wasn't it, although the winters here are
>much friendlier. Actually, it all started out with my sister
Chloe
having a child that she wasn't capable of caring for. So she
left her
>daughter Suzie with me. I had already decided to adopt her, when,
a
few months later, Chloe walked in and demanded her back. Chloe
>said she was now able to provide for her and wanted to live
in
Arizona with her boyfriend and Suzie. So I had no alternative
other
>than to give her Suzie back and live my life as it had been
before."<p>

"That must have been hard." Scully remembered her own daughter
>and how much losing her had hurt her, even though she had only
just
begun to know her. She sighed. That topic was still so
painful, she
>wondered, was that ever going to change?<p>

"It was terrible. I felt so lonely and my life so empty."

Scully nodded her understanding. "So you decided to follow them,"
>she deducted.<p>

"Yeah, after trying to live without Suzie for a few months I knew I
>couldn't continue like that. So I asked my boss to help me get my
stuff
together and then I applied for a job here. I got accepted
and left
>Chicago."<p>

"You were lucky they had an opening here just then. So you just
>packed up and left? You didn't have any trouble leaving your
friends
and colleagues behind?"

"Of course. Making that decision was hard, but after I had chosen my
>path I was so relieved and happy, I was sure it was the right
choice."<p>

"It probably was a big decision," Scully conceded. "How did your
>friends react?"<p>

"Well, first I told my best friend, Mark. I had dreaded telling him
>because I knew he'd be upset. But I knew I had to, so, when he
came
over to my apartment with this silly accusation about me
having an
>affair with my boss..." Susan smiled at the memory.<p>

Scully's eyebrows shot up. "He accused you of having an
affair?"

"Yeah, though I really don't know where he got the idea. I told him,
>no, we didn't have an affair, that he had only helped me get all
the
paperwork for my transfer done." Susan laughed at the memory.

>"Actually it was pretty cute, how Mark stood in my living
room
asking me about my relationship to Dr. Morgenstern."

"And how did he react when you told him that you wanted to leave? I
>mean Phoenix is rather far from Chicago." Scully remembered
that
last year she had rather quit the FBI than move to Salt Lake
City --
>away from Mulder.<p>

"Oh, I felt so bad about my decision then. He looked at me with those
>sad and disbelieving eyes and the way his face fell... Gosh! But he
was
so sweet about the whole matter: When I told him that I was
relieved
>about my decision, that a life in Phoenix would make me happy,
he
said I should go and be happy."

"Seems like a decent guy."

"Decent? That doesn't even begin to describe him." Susan tried to
>think of an incident that would demonstrate her new friend just
how
'decent' a guy Mark was. "You know, I have this terrible fear
of
>flying," she began.<p>

Scully nodded, she could certainly relate to that. She remembered her
>first case with Mulder: The airplane had been caught in
turbulence
and she had clutched her armrests in fear for life,
whereas Mulder had
>not cared much about the shaking airplane. "I've gotten a lot
better
about it myself, but I know what you mean."

Susan's gaze turned inward as she remembered the particular day.

>"Once, Mark and I had to fly on a rescue helicopter and I
was
clinging to him for the whole flight. He was so nice to let me
and even
>squeezed my arm to reassure me. Later, when I went back on

the
helicopter while he had to stay in the hospital, he was all worried
>about me flying alone again."<p>

"Strange, Mulder did the same for me, actually. I mean I'm not afraid
>of flying itself, but when the plane is in turbulence I can get pretty

scared. So, every time - since Mulder noticed this about me - when the
>plane starts to tremble, he distracts me with a card game, a file or one<p>

of his wild theories that he throws at me."

"Well, seems like a pretty decent guy himself, huh?"

The two women chuckled and continued talking about the most
>important men in their lives.<p>

"I remember as if it were yesterday," Susan admitted with a rueful
>smile on her face and began her story...<p>

"Susan! SUSAN!" She stopped hoisting her last piece of luggage into
>the train but rather looked up and to her right, thinking she must be

hallucinating, because she thought she heard someone hollering her
>name...<p>

"Mark!" she yelled as she saw him running towards her. When he
>finally reached her, gasping for air, she asked concerned and

confused: "Mark, are you okay? You came to say good-bye?"

Mark only shook his head, he was still out of breath and was still
>busily gulping down air. Finally: "No. Stay. I want you to stay."<p>

"But, Mark...", she started.

He interrupted her, though. "I love you. And I'm stupid for not
saying
>it before."<p>

Susan was speechless for a moment, then she smiled. "No, no it's
>okay...I-- I knew. In a way, I knew."<p>

That obviously wasn't enough for Mark. "Stay. We belong together.
>Tell me you don't feel the same...?"<p>

After a long pause Susan said, "I'm sorry."

"We're right together," Mark insisted.

Trying to hold back tears, Susan said, "Mark, you are my best friend,
I
>don't know how I'm going to make it without you."<p>

"Don't go", Mark pleaded with her.

"I have to", she explained. "I don't belong here anymore, I have a
new
>life, it's going in a different direction."<p>

"Susan, I don't want to lose you." He looked like he was going to cry
>any minute now.<p>

Susan hugged him to her, then raised her head away from his chest.

>They looked into each other's eyes and then she touched her lips
to
his. Their kiss was short but full of emotion. The conductor
pulled her
>on the train, just barely before it started to move.<p>

Before the door closed completely, Susan assured Mark: "I'll never

>forget you."
A few horrible seconds past, during which Susan
realized she had to
>tell Mark the truth. When she looked out of the open window
again
Mark was standing there staring at the train leaving. "I do
love
>you," she yelled.<p>

Mark only stared at her in shock. "What?"

"I love you!" She shouted louder and more confident this time. Mark

>stared at her dumbfounded and didn't react until she
screamed,
"Bye!", smiling and waving at him. Not able to handle
the sight of
>him standing there, looking so confused and lost, any more,
she
disappeared back into the train.

"Leaving him was the hardest thing I ever had to do," Susan uttered

>with a sigh.<p>

"Did you ever see him again?" Scully asked, still amazed at the

>dramatic scene Susan had just described.<p>

"No," Susan admitted. "I've only written him a card for the very
first
>Christmas. Otherwise I've written only the whole gang at the ER
at
once and also Carol, a friend of mine who works there, once or
twice
>a year."<p>

"So you didn't talk about that scene at the train station again?"
Scully

knew denial when she heard it. She had enough experience with it

>herself.<p>

"I didn't feel comfortable bringing it up. I thought we could just
>ignore it and go on like before. But then I decided not to write
him
anymore, so that we both could move on with our lives."

"But it didn't work." It wasn't a question. "Not for you, and
probably
>not for him. Mulder and I tried that, too... Denying what
had
happened... Needless to say, it didn't work either. I guess,
we're
>probably still thinking about it... at least I am ...all the
time."
Scully
>stared ahead unseeingly, and a soft, reminiscing smile played
around
her lips.

"What happened?" Susan was glad to be able to divert the attention
>from her life for a while.<p>

Averting her eyes, Scully fingered the material of Mulder's blanket.

>"We -- we almost kissed a year ago."<p>

This was starting to become an interesting story, Susan decided.

>"Almost? Did you stop him? Or he you?"<p>

"No. No, the intention was mutual. But we got interrupted ... by a
bee
>that stung me. To make a long story short, things came up and then
it
didn't seem appropriate to talk about it any more. So we left
it at
>that.
An Almost Kiss."

"A bee?" Susan couldn't quite keep the grin off her face.

Scully smiled in return. "You have absolutely NO idea..."

"And you've been working together a year and haven't discussed the

>matter? Isn't it confusing not to be sure where you stand?"
That
earned her a 'Look' from Scully. "Okay, okay, the pot and the
kettle, I
>know..."<p>

End part 1

MYTOWN

>NOW THAT I FOUND YOU<p>

How can I believe that my
>Heart would find someone like you
You see the real me
>No in-betweens, I had nowhere to hide
You took away the walls
around me
>Made me feel safe to share my truth Chorus:
I see the heavens
open
>A heart that once was broken
Is holding nothing back
>Now that I found you baby
Now that I found you

You believe we're meant to be
>Our chemistry will last forever
And through the years we've seen
some tears
>We'll conquer fears, together we will grow
When I'm looking in
your eyes they tell me
>I'll no longer have to feel alone <p>

Because you, you see me
>The real me
You believe in me

2. Second Chances 2

SECOND CHANCES (2/2)
>by Nussy and Cirglas<p>

See disclaimers and authors' notes in part one.

POSTED: May 5 th 2000

May 18 th
>1:32 pm
ICU

"The worst thing is, it all feels so purposeless now. I mean, I came
in
>the hope of starting anew, seeing my niece all the time, helping
Chloe and
even making myself a career."

Susan and Scully were once again talking about their lives. They both
>enjoyed the hour long chats, for they both didn't have that many
friends
to talk to and share their feelings and experiences with.
And now it seemed
>as if they had both found someone who understood them.<p>

"And?" Scully prompted when Susan hesitated.

"And, it turned out completely different. I'm here, working in the
ER,
>only getting to see Little Suzie about once every two or three
weeks, thanks
to my work schedule. Chloe and her husband really
don't need my help that much
>and 'cept for the few dollars more that I earn, I'm not making much
of a
career. I could have just stayed in Chicago all along. This
is Chloe's
>family and life. I should have concentrated on getting my own and
not tried to
cling to someone else's."

"You really think you made the wrong decision?"

"I don't know. What would you have done, had you been me?"

"I'm not sure." Scully thought of Emily again and how much she had
loved
>the little girl after only a few days. She still wasn't able to
tell
Susan about that particular painful memory, but she could
certainly relate to that
>kind of Connection to a child. Scully knew very well what she had
done, had she
been in Susan's place. "I probably would have done

the same thing," she
>said. "But the question is whether you regret it, especially
leaving
Mark."

A long pause.

"Maybe it would have worked out with Mark and me, maybe I could have
>stayed. But I'm not so sure about that. If he'd -- if we'd
admitted
our feelings earlier, then it might have worked. But by
the time we did
>admit our feelings, I had already arranged everything. I had planned
and organized
my move, I had even said good-bye to Chicago, my
former life, my friends...
>had gotten used to the idea, had already decided to end the life I
had lead
until then. I couldn't just change my plans, make a
U-turn only because Mark
>had decided he wanted me with him. And I still wanted to be with
Suzie, so I
had to be strong. I couldn't show any indecision -
especially to Mark."

"But you could have decided differently the minute he admitted his
love
>for you." Scully was not letting Susan off the hook that quickly.
She
realized that this was a very sore topic for her friend, but
also that it was
>important to talk about.<p>

Another long pause.

Susan averted her gaze. "Yeah, I guess I could have." Then she found
the
>strength again to meet her friend's gaze. "And just a split second
I
wanted to do it. I wanted to stay with him so badly."

"Why didn't you stay?" Scully inquired.

"The way we depended on one another scared me shitless," Susan said

>solemnly. The two women chuckled.
"No." Susan's face
straightened. "Actually, I think I expected my future
>to be with Little Suzie. I had been so lonely when Chloe took her
back and I
wanted the pain to ease. I wanted to be a part in
Suzie's life; she was
>like a daughter to me and I didn't want her to forget me. But I just
didn't
take into account the pain it would cause me to leave Mark.
I thought I could
>always come back to him and we'd resume where we'd left
off..."<p>

"Do you think it's still possible?" Now, this was a question Scully

>still had to answer for herself and asking it of someone else helped
her realize
that.

"I don't know." She smilingly shook her head. "I don't think going
back
>would be as easy as I thought back then. The irony is, I've been
offered
a job in County General again. It's a good job, better
paid than this one. My

>boss came to me yesterday and told me that there was an opening and he wanted

to notify me, since he thought I was a good candidate for the job,
>particularly because I already know the staff and the area. And County General would

even want me back. So now I only have to say 'yes' and the job is mine."
>She shrugged.<p>

"Wow, talking about coincidences. Would you want to go back? To Mark?"

Suddenly, a spark in the other woman's eyes appeared that hadn't been

>there before. "I'd love to go back. I can almost see his face--- " Her face fell

again. "But it's been over 2 years now. Two and a half, actually. Maybe there's
>someone else now, someone that's taken my place... I don't think I could bear

that. I'd rather not know."

"You got a second chance, Susan! It's now or never... No, wait. Let me
>rephrase that: it's NOW!" Scully said forcefully with more enthusiasm

than Susan had expected.

Susan shook her head sadly. "I don't know. I have friends here now, I
>don't know if I want to start all over again."<p>

"But you wouldn't have to start from scratch. At least not completely.
>I'm sure that in two years a lot has changed, but you'll make it. You know

people there. You've been through a lot with them, got to know them really
>well. Those are friendships that last. They aren't over just because you

left."
>Scully hoped her friend would realize that she shouldn't throw this

once-in-a-life- time chance away.

"You think so?"

"Yeah, I think you should do it."

"Really?" Susan asked in hopeful uncertainty.

"As I said, Susan, you've got a second chance. How many people can say
>that about a major decision they've made?"<p>

"That's true." Still not convinced, though.

"How about going there on vacation before you make a definite decision
>about the job? You could try it out, test the waters so to speak... You

could check out the situation, get reacquainted with your friends, catch up
>and perhaps even make up for lost time. Don't you think they'll be pleased

if you show up for a visit?"

"Yeah, I guess they would."

Scully could see the smile on Susan's face growing and her eyes becoming
>more alive. Now to give her the last push: "You could talk to Mark
and
see if his feelings were -- are -- genuine and if he still
cares for you. And
>how you feel about him, for that matter. So? What do you
say?"<p>

"I'd say..."

"Yeah?" Scully leaned forward to not miss a word.

"I'd say..." A big grin spread over Susan's face. "I think it's time
>for me to go to a Bulls Game again. Haven't been to one in a
while..."<p>

May 20 th
>4:26 pm
ICU

" 'so that there is distinct evidence of a conspiracy...'--- Oh,
>really??--- 'Sources have verified the existence of an unknown agent
in the toys
that is used to gather information about the owner.'
--- come on, guys!!-----,
>'but our sources confirm that not only does the government observe
our
children through Star Wars figures, but it also experiments
with mind control
>devices through matching video games. There are suspicions that
George Lucas has
only brought out the new movie to sell even more
of the mentioned
>merchandise...' ---- This is ridiculous!! Mulder, I hope you
realize
what a sacrifice I'm making for you."

There was no reply from the bed, the ever unmoving figure remained as
it
>was. Scully heaved a sigh and gave the hand she was holding a
friendly
squeeze. "Come on, Mulder, I know you're in there
somewhere... It's
>time to bug the nurses and infuriate the doctors..."<p>

Heaving a sigh, Scully turned the page with her unoccupied hand and
>skimmed the next few articles to find one that she could read to
Mulder.
This was horrible. Here she was, reading THE LONE GUNMAN
to Mulder, for
>his benefit as well as to kill time. She just hoped the room
wasn't
bugged and that nobody could hear these crazy ramblings
about government
>conspiracies and aliens, because she was afraid they'd take her
straight to a mental
asylum.

But she was already through her medical magazines, that day's
Washington
>Post and the new issue of THE BEST CROSSWORDS EVER - not
that
Mulder had been a great help solving them. She refused to
read a
>SEVENTEEN to Mulder. She had seen one in the waiting room but had
not
taken it with her. So the guys' theories kept her company when
her

>favorite believer was out. Good thing The Gunmen had sent the new issue to their
hotel... she didn't even want to know how the guys had gotten Mulder's
>and her recent address.<p>

"Mulder, if you don't wake up soon, I'll start to believe this stuff I'm
>reading." No reaction. This was terrible. The doctors had said he would
probably wake up during the next 24 hours or so, but of course they
>didn't know for sure. It was up to Mulder. It was up to Mulder to lay her
worries about him to rest. "Mulder, wake up and tell me you're okay."

Because that didn't get his attention, she tried humor: "Come on, Mulder
>I'm bored senseless. I need one of your wild theories to poke holes in, or
how about a nice little argument about the existence of extraterrestrials?"

Since there was still no reply from the man on the bed, she gave up for
>the time being. She dropped the magazine on the bedside table and looked
around the room for something to do. Nothing. She started tapping her
>foot and made herself stop. After a while she noticed that now she was
drumming her fingers on the armrest instead.

She closed her eyes and rolled her head around to relieve some tension.
>"You know, Mulder, this is not what I understand under 'silent
communication'."

She felt a slight squeeze of her hand.

And then he started choking on the tube down his throat.

She jumped up in a fluid motion that was so quick it only took an
>instant and pushed the nurses' button. Then she was at his side.<p>

"It's okay, Mulder, don't fight the respirator. Just try to relax. The
>doctors will be here in a sec and they'll remove it right away. That's good.
Just let it breathe for you, there you go."

At her words and touch he calmed down a bit, but he appeared far from
>happy with the situation -- who could blame him for that?
She brushed the stubborn lock of hair from his brow and then stroked his
>cheek with the back of her fingers.<p>

She hated to see Mulder suffering because of the respirator and wondered
>how long the nurses or doctors would need to get there... Mulder pulled
violently at the restraints that bound his hands. Scully recognized he
>certainly didn't like the machine breathing for him and

desperately
wanted to rip out the respirator.

When Mulder started choking again, it was Scully's cue to take action.

>She tore open the drawer of the bedside table, grabbed a pair of scissors
and swiftly cut the smaller tube that lead to the inflation cuff of the

>respirator.
"You can't wait, huh? Okay, Mulder, help me out. When I say 'now',

>breath out as hard as you can.-- NOW!" While he breathed out, she pulled out
the now-deflated tube.

Though in pain and coughing, Mulder seemed relieved to get rid of the

>offending plastic and he thanked her with his eyes.<p>

"There you go." She smiled at him. She smoothed her hand through his

>hair and patted his good shoulder. "Welcome back, Mulder."<p>

May 22 th

>Room 416
12:33 pm

"Mulder do you want me to feed you?" Scully remarked after watching

>Mulder pick and prod his jello for 5 minutes.<p>

Scully had picked an untimely moment for her comment, for Mulder was

>just taking a sip of water. Her remark caused him to choke and send the water
flying through the room. She chuckled and patted his back to alleviate his suffering.

"Sorry," Scully apologized when he had calmed down again.

"You want to kill me, Scully?"

"What, you can dish out, but not receive?"

"Scully, you wound me." He tried to get her with his famous puppy-dog

>look.<p>

"I will if you won't eat your jello."

"I thought you'd feed me."

"You wish."

"You been reading my journal again?" he leered.

"That would be a good idea. Maybe then I'd understand what's going on in

>that brilliant mind of yours."<p>

"Brilliant, huh?"

"Oops, please, don't tell Skinner I slipped..."

"You keeping other secrets from me?"

"Maybe."

"Maybe?"

"You're a brilliant FBI agent... figure it out yourself."

"Think I should start with body-searching you?"

She sent a look his way that he had trouble identifying as good or bad.

>He swallowed.
A knock interrupted their gaze. The door opened and Susan stepped in.

"Hey, Mulder, I heard you're being a pill... The nurses said they've

>never seen anyone as stubborn as you."<p>

Mulder smiled a welcome to the intruder. He had only met Dr. Lewis

>briefly yesterday but had liked her and she and Scully seemed to have developed
a particular friendship over the week he'd been in the hospital.

"Well, that's what I promised you, Susan, remember?" Scully smiled at

>her friend. "I've tried to make him stop, but he keeps bugging everybody --
including me -- with the question of when he'll be out of here. How was
>your morning?"<p>

A few medical sentences followed, of which Mulder understood the words

>'I' and 'was able to'. That was about it, so he gave up trying. When he
heard 'Chicago' mentioned he looked up, thinking he might be able to take part
>in the conversation again.<p>

"Yeah, Chicago's beautiful this time of year. I talked to Carol and she

>said I should wait another week or two before I go...", Susan was just now
saying.

Mulder's thoughts drifted off again. What on earth were they talking

>about? The worst thing was, he was used to having Scully all to himself when in
hospital. And now? This time she had made friends with this doctor.

>Okay, Susan was nice and he was glad Scully hadn't been sitting around all
alone while he was out of it. But now he was awake, so Scully was supposed to
>give him her undivided attention.<p>

He looked back at Scully's profile and absently nibbled his bottom lip

>while pondering what to do to attract her attention.<p>

"Scully, did you know--"

"Can it wait just a minute, Mulder?" And with an apologetic smile she

>continued her conversation with Susan.<p>

Mulder was dumbfounded. What was going on? He tried two or three more

>times to squeeze in a sentence of his own, but failed miserably.
Women...

He was getting bored and started playing with his jello. He scooped it

>up on the spoon and played catapult. The smudge of jello landed in front of
him on the blanket. He was satisfied though, for he knew Scully would react to

>that; she was such a neat freak.<p>

However, Scully only took the napkin from the tablet and without so much

>as a glance in his direction cleaned the mess up without missing a beat in
her sentence.

Mulder prayed to the heavens above that Scully would pay attention to

>him again.<p>

Someone must have listened, because, just then, Susan's beeper went off.

"Well, gotta run." Lewis quickly exited the room with a "see you, guys"

>thrown over her shoulder.<p>

Yes! Scully was all his ---

"Mulder, I think I'll go, too."

Oh, NO!! Mulder's hopes were destroyed.

"Don't look at me like that, Mulder. I didn't run after the suspect and

>get shot. I will not suffer through jello. I prefer REAL food, thank you
very much."

He shot her a glare. "What about the cafeteria?"

"No, thanks. I know what hospital food is like, that's why I'm eating

>out. Anyway, the police department asked me to stop by today, so I'll eat
something on the way over there."

"And you make me eat my jello!"

"Mulder, if you're a good boy, I'll ask them to only give you ice cream

>instead of all that jello..."<p>

His eyes lit up. "Hmmm. I wonder if there's sunflower seed ice cream?"

She fought the smile in reaction to his joke, but failed. "And I

>promise, I'll be back to read you a good-night story."<p>

One side of his mouth curved up.

Scully started collecting her stuff and then leaned over to give Mulder

>a hug which he gladly returned as well as he could with a hurting shoulder.
"You know, if you're REALLY good, I might even sing you a lullaby tonight,"

>she whispered into his ear right before she gave him a peck on his cheek.<p>

His smile became a full-fledged grin.

Reluctantly, they let go of each other and she left.

And Mulder grinned throughout the afternoon.

Epilogue

>About 7 months later
December 18 th, 1999

Dana Scully woke up with a warm feeling of contentment. She stretched

>languidly, bathing in the knowledge that it was Saturday and there was
no need to go into work today. The bed shifted as Mulder came awake next to

>her. She rolled onto her side and lovingly gazed down at him. His eyes
slowly opened and revealed hazel orbs looking back at her.

"Hey, Scully."

"Hey, yourself."

They smiled at each other and after quite a while of reading each

>other's eyes, Scully leaned down to touch her lips to his.<p>

She still couldn't quite believe it: Mulder and she were lovers now, had

>been for almost six months, actually. Scully smiled as she remembered the
"pep-talk" she had given Susan a few days before that and the way her new

>friend had turned towards her afterwards and said:<p>

"You know what, Dana? I'll tell you something. You start working on your

>relationship with Mulder and I -- I'll go visit Mark, okay? Is that a
deal?"

Scully had looked at her shoes a little embarrassed and had replied:

>"Susan, you don't understand. My situation is different from yours --"<p>

"Right, you don't have to move somewhere else for this someone and you

>pretty much know that your man loves you."<p>

"No. -- Yes. Well, that isn't what I mean. Mulder's and my jobs are

very

>dangerous. We have made ourselves numerous enemies over time and I'm
afraid they might use a relationship between Mulder and me against us."

"From what you've told me, they already do that. You haven't told me

>everything, I know, but I think life is hard and short enough.

Everybody
takes risks every day: driving in traffic, riding an elevator, eating in

>a restaurant. I admit that my job isn't as risky as yours - even though I
used to think it's pretty dangerous, before you told me about your life...

>Anyway, I admit your life is in greater jeopardy than those of 'normal' people,
but that's why you have to live a little. Milk life for what it's worth, Dana. You

>deserve a little happiness in life, too, you know."<p>

What could she have said to that, other than "yes."? So she had agreed

>to at least give it a try and ask Mulder about his plans for their future -
since she felt that he had some say in the matter, too - while Susan would go back

>and visit her friend(s) in Chicago.<p>

It was Mulder's turn to make breakfast, so Scully claimed the shower for

>herself. They had decided to go Christmas shopping today and since they
did want to get going, they mutually decided that he better not join her in

>the bathroom. When she stepped into the kitchen they enjoyed breakfast
together. After that Mulder took his shower whilst Scully did the

>dishes.<p>

That done, she had some extra time to kill so she went to fetch the

>mail. Sifting through the envelopes, a colorful postcard caught her attention.
She marveled on the beautiful sunset over a city that was portrayed there.

>She smiled when she read what was scribbled over it:<p>

Greetings from Chicago.

She only new one person from Chicago.

She quickly turned it over and scanned the handwriting. She smiled at

>the good news her friend had for her. Then she read it again more closely.<p>

Hey, Dana,

>thought I'd drop you a line. Mark is great.
We just celebrated our 1/2 -year anniversary a few

>days ago. Chicago's a lot 'hotter' than I remembered
it. :-) Hope you and Mulder are doing okay.

>If you happen to come to Chicago,
please stop by, I have a lot to thank you for.

>Marry X-mas, you two. Take care (of each other).
Thanx,
Susan

End of Story

MYTOWN

>NOW THAT I FOUND YOU<p>

You believe we're meant to be

>Our chemistry will last forever
And through the years we've seen
some tears

>We'll conquer fears, together we will grow
When I'm looking in
your eyes they tell me

>I'll no longer have to feel alone<p>

Because you, you see me

>The real me
You believe in me

End

file.